

Statement on Violence in the Republic of Georgia *October 19, 1998*

I am deeply disturbed by reports of violence in the western part of the Republic of Georgia, where heavily armed opposition forces seized hostages and clashed with Government troops today.

The United States strongly supports the democratically elected Government of Georgia, headed by President Eduard Shevardnadze, and

the stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Georgia.

We are glad that the opposition forces decided late today to release their hostages, and we call on the opposition forces to resolve their differences with the Government through peaceful and democratic means rather than by armed confrontation.

Statement on Signing the Year 2000 Information and Readiness Disclosure Act *October 19, 1998*

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 2392, the "Year 2000 Information and Readiness Disclosure Act."

As our Nation prepares for the year 2000 (Y2K), we face an urgent need to address the Y2K problem, which may cause computers and embedded systems that run America's critical infrastructure to malfunction or even shut down. With little over a year until January 1, 2000, this is a serious global challenge that businesses and governments around the world must address.

Today, my Council on Year 2000 Conversion is launching "National Y2K Action Week," to urge small- and medium-sized businesses to take the necessary steps to ensure that the technologies they and their business partners depend upon are ready for the year 2000. Over the next 5 days, the Small Business Administration, the Department of Commerce, and several other Federal agencies will host Y2K educational events at their field offices across the Nation. As part of this week, we are also urging State, local, tribal governments, and community organizations to address this critical problem. More than 160 national organizations representing industries, professions, government, and the non-profit sector have joined the Council in promoting Y2K action during this week.

This legislation will help provide businesses, governments, and other organizations with the necessary informational tools to overcome the Y2K computer problem. This Act, which builds

upon a proposal my Administration submitted to the Congress in July, is an important bipartisan accomplishment. I particularly want to thank those in the Congress whose hard work and support of this legislation made its passage possible. Representatives Horn, Kucinich, Morella, Barcia, Leach, LaFalce, Hyde, Conyers, Dreier, and Eshoo and Senators Bennett, Dodd, Hatch, Leahy, and Kyl were integral to getting this work done and done quickly.

Many organizations have been reluctant to share valuable information about their experiences in dealing with the Y2K problem or the status of their Y2K efforts for fear of lawsuits. The Act's limited liability protections will promote and encourage greater information sharing about both experiences and solutions, which will significantly enhance public and private sector efforts to prepare the Nation's computer systems for the new millennium. However, the bill will not affect liability that may arise from Y2K failures of systems or devices.

While I understand that companies have a wide range of concerns related to the Y2K transition and potential litigation, we must also protect the rights of consumers. Therefore, this legislation is focused exclusively on exposure related to information exchange and would not cover statements to individual consumers in marketing a product normally used for personal use.

Firms within an industry confront similar challenges as they work to ensure that their